



## Europe Underdeveloped Africa

*“Colonialism had only one hand - it was a one-armed bandit.”*

So as not to forget that the National Democratic Revolution, as well as the contested concept of “Development”, arose from the anti-colonial and then anti-neo-colonial struggles, it is worth reading some of the late [Walter Rodney's](#) words. Linked below is Chapter 6 from Rodney's 1973 book “How Europe Underdeveloped Africa”, written while Rodney was a lecturer at the University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. The first paragraph corresponds nicely with Moore's article (used yesterday), denying

*“...that ‘after all there must be two sides to a thing’. The argument suggests that, on the one hand, there was exploitation and oppression, but, on the other hand, colonial governments did much for the benefit of Africans*

*and they developed Africa. It is our contention that this is completely false. Colonialism had only one hand - **it was a one-armed bandit.***”

On a personal note, this VC of yours is one who attended, with my parents, when aged 12, the opening of Embakasi Airport in Nairobi, mentioned on page 4 of this Walter Rodney text as “the world's first handmade international airport”. I can tell you that Embakasi on the face of it appeared to me at that moment to be a perfect, and dazzling, advertisement for modernity. This contrast of reality and appearance was typical of colonialism.

Rodney divided this crucial chapter of his book into four parts, which are:

**6.1 The Supposed Benefits of Colonialism to Africa  
(extract attached)**

**6.2 Negative character of the social, political and  
economic consequences**

**6.3 Education for Underdevelopment**

**6.4 Development by Contradiction.**

Reading this document again reminds one of many things about the recent colonial past that are already being forgotten, even while they are being reproduced in new ways. Rodney is especially valuable because he wrote from the other side of the apartheid “front line” but was very well aware of the inter-dependence of all colonialism, whether of a “special type” or not, and also of neo-colonialism.

Walter Rodney belongs in the company of the greats like Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral, whose work he knew and quoted.

**Image:** The late, immortal [Walter Rodney](#), assassinated by a bomb, in 1980.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-texts: [Colonialism as a System for Underdeveloping Africa, Walter Rodney](#).
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